HENRY IV: THE KING BY ROLE

YOSHIHIRO ANDO

The purpose of the present series of study is to examine William Shakespeare's second historical tetralogy—*Richard II*, *Henry IV: Parts I & II*, and *Henry V*—emphasising the relationship between the king's public role and the private self. As Ernest H. Kantrowicz shows in *The King's Two Bodies*,[1] the king has two symbolic bodies: a body natural and a body politic. The former symbolises the king's private self, and the latter his public or social role. Reflecting this Tudor theory of kingship, Shakespeare describes how the three kings sustain a royal role, suffering a heavy burden of responsibility.

Although Richard II is a king who has a legitimate right to the crown, because of his divine right by birth he cannot understand his responsibility for public welfare; because he is a king automatically, he cannot be aware that he has to act the part of king. When the king, who is responsible for keeping social order, destroys it, his subjects and his people forsake him. As soon as he loses public support, Richard realises that his title is unsubstantial, and surrenders the crown in despair. But, even if he is deposed, he is still a king, because nobody can deprive him of his birth-right. In the last issue I analised Richard's identity crisis as a king who had lost his public identity.[2] From the viewpoint of politics Richard's deposition is indispensable for the public welfare. But once the anointed king has been deposed and murdered, England under Henry Bolingbroke comes to suffer

recurrent social broils. Ironically Bolingbroke's success in deposing a tyrant entails political chaos. As a usurper-king, he is fully aware that he is acting the part of a king; he tries to act the good king, but his usurped crown bears down heavily on him. As a king he must fight against the Pereys who rebel against him on the ground of the illegitimacy of his kingship. As a usurpur the consciousness of guilt torments him; and as a father the prodigalities of his son, Prince Hal, distress him. In this treatise I would like to examine Henry Bolingbroke's conflicts as a king, usurper, and father. His successor, Henry Monmouth, is a born governor; he has every quality required of an ideal king—the sort of monarch which the late Tudor age might have waited for. At the same time, he has every quality required of a player-king. Acting is a typical characteristic of this young man. He seems to know exactly what the people expect of the king, and calculates every act in terms of an ideal king. But in order to play out the role of the ideal king, he has to face unresolvable conflict between the private and the public. Next time I would like to examine the process through which he adapts himself to his public role.

I

In the final act of *Richard II*, Richard, forced to divorce Queen Isabel, and facing the prospect of confinement in Pomfret Castle, makes an ominous prophecy. To Northumberland, who has acted a kingmaker against his oath of fealty to him, he says:

> Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal
> The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,
> The time shall not be many hours of age
> More than it is, ere foul sin gathering head

Shall break into corruption: thou shalt think,
Though he divide the realm and give thee half,
It is too little, helping him to all;
He shall think that thou, which knowest the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne'er so little urg'd, another way
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
The love of wicked men converts to fear,
That fear to hate, and hate turns one or both
To worthy danger and deserved death.

V. i. 55–68.[3)]

This prophecy is soon to be fulfiled. Even if Richard is politically inept—indeed, harmful to his country—he remains an anointed king and a keystone of order. Once Richard is deposed and murdered, the principle of order is abolished. It is a great irony that if Richard had to be deposed for the sake of restoring order in England, the man who deposed him should have, by this act, created a disordered kingdom. If Richard's deposition was necessary to prevent social chaos, the consequent disorder is equally inevitable. In his last years Henry IV comes to realise the invisible hands of 'necessity' which has manipulated him.

Henry Bolingbroke is a man who aimed to become a good ruler and failed to do so. As a usurper, he is always aware that he is merely a player-king. But, paradoxically and in exact contrast to Richard, this very realization drives him to act the part of a good king. It is undeniable that Bolingbroke has sought the good of the state. He knows, as monarch, he is responsible for public welfare, a duty which Richard wholly ignored. Carrying this heavy moral and social burden, he struggles to act out his part. But he cannot restore the order, which he has destroyed, perfectly, because of his illegitimate kingship. Of the three kings in the second tetralogy, Henry

Bolingbroke is the only one to experience a tragic gap between his role and himself in active form. Richard is the victim, not the agent, of tragedy (of a conflict set up by the divine right, which he did not bring upon himself). Henry Monmouth transcends tragedy in his conbination of legitimacy and leadership. Only Bolingbroke suffers, during his reign, from anxiety about conflicts between his role as king and himself.

II

Conflicts are a keynote of the *Henry IV* plays. The main plot, needless to say, is made up of the political conflict between the royal family and the Percys. But in addition to this external conflict, there is also a strange conflict between the political world, presented in verse, and the vulgar world of Eastcheap, presented in prose. The former is the world of principles or ideals, like justice or honour, on the one hand, and that of appearance or hypocrisy, on the other. The latter is the world of low passions, like greed, gluttony, or cowardice. But, at the same time, it is the world of true intentions free from hypocrisy. These two worlds seem to reflect and criticise each other. And in addition some striking individual conflicts between the characters can be seen: for instance, a conflict between Prince Hal and Hotspur, between Falstaff and Lord Chief Justice, and so on—although the nature of the conflicts is quite different.

Conflict is, at the same time, a keynote of King Henry IV himself. The problems which torment him are threefold. First, as a usurper, he is guilt-ridden by his consciousness of his unlawful deposition of Richard, and of his responsibility, even if indirect, for his killing. Second, as a ruler, he must confront recurrent rebellions against his authority—even from his sworn friends and allies like the Percys. And finally, as a father, he is always worried about Prince Hal, his son and heir, who has acquired a reputation for debauchery. Bolingbroke,

who thirsts after the love of the young prince, suffers from the effects of an estrangement. As is usual in Shakespeare, the opening scene of *Henry IV: Part I* adroitly represents all these conflicts, moral, political, and personal. The play begins with the king's helpless speech.

> So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
> Find we a time for frighted peace to pant,
> And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
> To be commenc'd in stronds afar remote:
> No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
> Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood,
> No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
> Nor bruise her flow'rets with the armed hoofs
> Of hostile paces.
>
> I. i. 1–9.

As M. M. Reese points out, 'the limp, exhausted rhythms of the opening speech announce the nature of Bolingbroke's England.'[4] In order to heal the deep wounds of civil war, King Henry proposes a crusade to the Holy Land.

> Therefore, friends,
> As far as to the sepulchre of Christ—
> Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross
> We are impressed and engag'd to fight—
> Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
> Whose arms were moulded in their mothers' womb
> To chase these pagans in those holy fields
> Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet
> Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
> For our advantage on the bitter cross.
>
> I. i. 18–27.

The king emphasises that it is their destiny to make a crusade. It is noteworthy that the play opens with a representation of

Bolingbroke's fatalism. Later he continues to ascribe the vicissitudes of his life to 'necessity' and sees all his misfortunes as a fate. But in addition to his fatalism, this passage implies his moral remorse. He clings to the project of a crusade in order to redeem his sin. Until he dies in a room named 'Jerusalem', his life is, in one sense, a long journey of atonement.

Despite the king's earnest plan, the crusade has to be postponed. When the king asks Westmoreland how the preparations for the crusade are progressing, he is given ominous news: Mortimer's army has been defeated, and Mortimer himself has been captured by Glendower. Furthermore, a local war has been broken out in the north between Hotspur and Douglas. Thus we learn that Bolingbroke's reign is tormented by incessant revolts, and as we do so, we are skilfully introduced to the four leading actors of the forthcoming revolt. In the end of the opening scene Bolingbroke's distrust of the Percys is shown, and his political conflict with them is foreshadowed.

The king's personal conflict with Prince Hal is also represented in this scene. Hearing Hotspur's victory over the Scots, King Henry praises the young nobleman highly. He says to Northumberland, Hotspur's father:

> Yea, there thou mak'st me sad, and mak'st me sin
> In envy that my Lord Northumberland
> Should be the father to so blest a son;
> A son who is the theme of honour's tongue,
> Amongst a grove the very straightest plant,
> Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride.
>
> I. i. 77–82.

Comparing himself and his hopes of succession to Northumberland's, he goes on:

> Whilst I by looking on the praise of him

See riot and dishonour stain the brow
Of my young Harry. O that it could be prov'd
That some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.

I. i. 83–89.

In spite of his deep disappointment at Hal's behaviour, Henry deeply loves his son. But he cannot be convinced of Hal's love of him. Critics often attribute Bolingbroke's failure to perceive Hal's true nature to his lack of understanding of his son.[5] But we should note that Bolingbroke always tries in various ways to open his heart to his son. And in this he is in contrast to Hal who does not show his true figure hidden behind his calculated acts. Suffering from moral remorse and political troubles, King Henry tries to find something humane, personal, and warm in their relationship. In this sense, what Bolingbroke may really seek for throughout his life is Hal's love—the lack of which makes his efforts to act a good ruler quite meaningless.

Thus the opening scene exhibits every problem which plagues Bolingbroke. We shall now examine each of these conflicts more closely.

III

At the end of *Richard II*, King Henry sat on the throne at Windsor, and heard that the conspirators against him had been arrested. Thereupon, Exton entered, carrying a coffin.

Great King, within this coffin I present
Thy buried fear. Herein all breathless lies
The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,
Richard of Burdeaux, by me hither brought.

V. vi. 30–33.

As Alvin Kernan points out, 'without the slightest intention of doing so, Exton defines perfectly the problems which the body of Richard is going to constitute when he offers it to the king as "Thy buried fear." Buried the body is in the ground; but the fear is also buried deep in the heart of Henry IV.'[6] To Exton, who expects a reward from him, Bolingbroke says sharply:

> They love not poison that do poison need,
> Nor do I thee. Though I did wish him dead,
> I hate the murtherer, love him murthered.
> The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour,
> But neither my good word nor princely favour;
> With Cain go wander thorough shades of night,
> And never show thy head by day nor light.
>
> V. vi. 38–44.

Although he reproaches Exton, Henry knows that it is he who is responsible for Richard's death. He acknowledges his own guilt and shares the burden of 'the guilt of conscience.' To his attendant lords Bolingbroke says:

> I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,
> To wash this blood off from my guilty hand.
>
> V. vi. 48–50.

But even 'all great Neptune's ocean' cannot wash Richard's blood off from his hand.

Henry's idea of a crusade is, presumably, prompted by the death of his sworn enemy, Thomas Mowbray. Bolingbroke probably believes that it is Mowbray who actually murdered his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester: it is possible, therefore, that when he heard that Mowbray fought against the pagans and died, he saw in it an example of atonement for sin. Be that as it may, as soon as his moral responsibility for Richard's death comes home to him, Bolingbroke announces his strong intention to go to the Holy Land.

Redemption, however, is not the only reason why the king adheres to the idea of crusade. It is also a calculated political act, designed to unify the state by diverting attention away from internal discontent and dissent. In *Henry IV: Part II* he confesses his political motive to Prince Hal, and suggests to him an expedition to weaken the memory of former enmity:

> Yet though thou stand'st more sure than I could do,
> Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green;
> And all my friends, which thou must make thy friends,
> Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out;
> By whose fell working I was first advanc'd,
> And by whose power I well might lodge a fear
> To be again displac'd; which to avoid,
> I cut them off, and had a purpose now
> To lead out many to the Holy Land,
> Lest rest and lying still might make them look
> Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,
> Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
> With foreign quarrels, that action hence borne out
> May waste the memory of the former days.
>
> IV. v. 202–215.

On the question of Bolingbroke's motive of the crusade, Derek Traversi writes:

> In calling for a crusade Henry is moved by motives in which selfish calculation is oddly mixed with a true desire for the common good. As crowned king he genuinely wishes to unite his subjects in a worthy and religious enterprise; but as usurper he hopes, in words used by him at a later stage, to 'busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels,' and so distract attention from the way which he came to the throne.[7]

These 'oddly mixed' motives come from Bolingbroke's complex

and tragic conflicts. But critics sometimes ignore or oversimplify the complexity of his character. In "Bolingbroke, a true Machiavellian," Irving Ribner concludes that Bolingbroke's zeal for a crusade is merely hypocritical pretence:

> Bolingbroke's last statement in *Richard II* is one in the Machiavellian vein. "I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land," he says. Machiavelli maintains throughout that good ruler must appear pious in the eyes of his people.[8]

But Ribner's view is only a half-truth. If Bolingbroke's intention were merely political or hypocritical, it would not be spontaneously revealed in a private situation. Except for the last scene of *Richard II*, he always reveals his commitment to his family or a few trustworthy counsellors. In *Henry IV: Part II*, just after hearing that Glendower has died and the rebel army has been suppressed, Bolingbroke again expresses his zeal for the crusade. To Warwick, who suggests he should take a rest, he replies:

> I will take your counsel.
> And were these inward wars once out of hand,
> We would, dear lords, unto the Holy Land.
>
> III. i. 106–08.

Henry's religious longing for repentance is shown even in the scene in which he tells his son to 'busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels.' His advice ends with a cry of repentance:

> How I came by the crown, O God forgive,
> And grant it may with thee in true peace live!
>
> IV. v. 218–19.

On his deathbed Bolingbroke desires to die in a room named "Jerusalem."

> Laud be to God! Even there my life must end.

It hath been prophesied to me, many years,
I should not die but in Jerusalem,
Which vainly I suppos'd the Holy Land.
But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;
In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

IV. v. 235–40.

Once again we hear his fatalism. Accepting everything as his fate, he tries to give his death a symbolic meaning. His end is like his beginning. In his very last moment he shows his three faces: as a king he advises his heir, Prince Hal, on how to govern the state; as a father he blessed his son; and as a usurper never free from guilt he desires to die in the room called "Jerusalem", longing for redemption.

IV

The discord between King Henry and the Percys implied in the opening scene is revealed when the king meets Northumberland, Worcester, and Hotspur. As soon as they come to the royal presence, Bolingbroke's anger against the Percys becomes evident. He begins his speech with an reproach against them:

My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
Unapt to stir at these indignities,
And you have found me—for accordingly
You tread upon my patience: but be sure
I will from henceforth rather be myself,
Mighty, and to be fear'd, than my condition,
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,
And therefore lost that title of respect
Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.

I. iii. 1–9.

Henry Bolingbroke, as a king, wishes to take political leadership completely into his own hands, and it is necessary to

unify the disordered state, but his past debt to the Percys does not allow him to hold real power. "I will henceforth rather play the strong king than yield to my native mildness,"[9] he says. His conflict with the Percys is a struggle to establish his social and political identity as a king. And, at the same time, it is, in a deeper sense, an internal struggle to realise his 'ego ideal' as a good ruler.

In reply to the king's reproaches, Worcester makes a sharp retort. As King Richard prophesied, and as Warwick will recognise in a later scene, their mutual distrust is inevitable; and it produces a bloody civil war. With the king's departure, Hotspur vents his anger at his ingratitude, calling the king 'this vile politician,' or this 'king of smiles.' Then Worcester promptly discloses his plot to topple Bolingbroke.

In the Percy's account of Bolingbroke's ascent to the throne, the emphasis is put wholly on his treachery and ambition. In a scene before the battle of Shrewsbury, Worcester justifies the revolt against the king, who has asked him to 'unknit' the 'churlish knot of all-abhorred war, and move in that obedient orb again.' Worcester claims that the Percys supported Bolingbroke only because he had made an oath that his ambition was limited to regaining his hereditary rights; and he implies that they were merely used by the king to gain the crown. Now that Bolingbroke is in possession of the crown, Worcester accuses him of forgetting his debt to the Percys and of threatening their security.

When the same story is told by King Henry, the emphasis is very different. In *Henry IV: Part II*, Bolingbroke looks back on his past and meditates on the invisible power of necessity.

> 'Tis not ten years gone,
> Since Richard and Northumberland, great friends,
> Did feast together, and in two years after

Were they at wars. It is but eight years since,
This Percy was the man nearest my soul;
Who like a brother toil'd in my affairs,
And laid his love and life under my foot;
Yea, for my sake, even to the eyes of Richard
Gave him defiance.
.....
When Richard, with his eyes brimful of tears,
Then check'd and rated by Northumberland,
Did speak these words, now prov'd a prophecy?
'Northumberland, thou ladder by the which
My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne'
(Though then, God knows, I had no such intent
But that necessity so bow'd the state
That I and greatness were compell'd to kiss)
'The time shall come'—thus did he follow it—
'The time will come, that foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption'—so went on,
Foretelling this same time's condition,
And the division of our amity.

III. i. 57–79.

Thus he ascribes his usurpation rather to fate than to ambition. For Bolingbroke, who suffers from almost unresolvable conflicts, fatalism is the only means to elucidate the meaning of his life. In the end of this scene he concludes:

Are these things then necessities?
Then let us meet them like necessities.

III. i. 92–93.

When King Henry repeats the same story to Prince Hal, the nuances are again different. In *Henry IV: Part I*, he describes the essential difference between Richard and himself, comparing the conduct of his prodigal son with that frivolous

king who 'mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools' and 'had his great name profaned with their scorns.'

> Had I so lavish of my presence been,
> So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
> So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
> Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
> Had still kept loyal to possession,
> .....
> By being seldom seen, I could not stir
> But like a comet I was wonder'd at,
> .....
> And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
> And dress'd myself in such humility
> That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
> Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
> Even in the presence of the crowned king.
>
> III. ii. 39–54.

Although he does not actually disclose his ambition for the throne, at least he admits that he deliberately managed his political image, appearing infrequently, but when he did so, assuming a courteous demeanour and humility calculated to win the people's allegiance. In other words, his popularity was the result of calculated acting.

Thus, Bolingbroke's accounts clearly contradict themselves. James Winny finds in these contradictions proof of Bolingbroke's hypocrisy.[10] But, in my opinion, they come not from hypocrisy but from complexity of his character. The Percys undoubtedly distort the truth. It is Northumberland who takes the initiative in Richard's desposition; furthermore, his intention to depose Richard is implied before he meets Bolingbroke. The Percys ignore their own political ambition. In contrast to this self-deception, Bolingbroke's contradictory re-

marks betray his internal conflict. His statements in *Henry IV: Part II*, act III, scene i, are a typical example. They are made in sickness, as he meditates upon the vicissitudes of life. On the one hand, he shows sympathy for Richard, and even for Northumberland; there can be no doubt that he is under the sway of remorse. On the other hand, he flatly denies his ambition for the crown. His statements in *Henry IV: Part I*, act III, scene ii, reveal another conflict. In spite of the fact that he is fighting against the Percys, he praises Hotspur, who 'turns head against the lion's jaws,' comparing that young man with himself when he returned from exile in order to redeem his title. And he expresses contempt for the frivolous Richard, and emphasises his own calculated acting to gain general popularity. Thus, as a man who is at the mercy of fate, Bolingbroke shows sympathy for Richard, but as a politician, he despises him. As a politician, he is proud of his capacity for calculation, but as a man who suffers from guilt, he attributes his usurpation to necessity.

On the battlefield Bolingbroke acts the warrior-king, wholly concealing his inner divisions. As soon as he heards that the Percys and Douglas have met at Shrewsbury, forming a mighty and fearful army, the king replies that his preparations are ready. This prompt and efficient countermove fully exhibits Bolingbroke's political skill as a ruler. On the one hand, he organises a royal army; on the other hand, he starts peace negotiations, offering generous terms which even his enemy calls 'kind and liberal.' At the peace negotiation the king says to Worcester:

> We love our people well, even those we love
> That are misled upon your cousin's part.
>
> V. i. 104–05.

'We love our people well'—This is something King Richard could never have said. When Bolingbroke returned from exile,

it was the people who supported him and made him king. As a chosen king, he is fully aware that it is his duty to govern well. Of course, even here there may lurk an element of political calculation or hypocrisy; but, still there is also something true is his speech. Or, even if what he says is a downright lie, we cannot deny that he knows what a king must do for his people, in other words, what the king should be. Henry's war against the Percys is nothing but a struggle to establish his social identity as a king.

During the battle of Shrewsbury, King Henry meets Douglas, who has killed the king's counterfeit. To Douglas, who doubts whether the man in front of him is the real king or another counterfeit, Henry replies:

> The King himself, who, Douglas, grieves at heart
> So many of his shadows thou hast met,
> And not the very King.
>
> V. iv. 28–30.

Is he the real king or the king's counterfeit? Unaware of the deeper meaning of this question, Bolingbroke offers to fight Douglas. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare, following Daniel, makes Prince Hal rescue the king who is in danger. Bolingbroke has to win the battle in order to testify that he is not a shadow but 'the very King.' But he fails to establish his public identity by his own hands. King Henry wins the civil war, but it is Prince Hal who has led the royal army to the victory. In the second part Bolingbroke is shown to be weakened and unable to lead his army: it is Prince John who defeats the Archbishop of York. Thus, although King Henry wins the war, he himself fails to achieve victory in his own battle for establishing his identity. His political conflict meets an ambiguous solution. And it is with the news of Northumberland's defeat that he sinks into death.

V

When, as he lies dying, King Henry comes out of a deep coma, he notices that his crown is no longer beside his bed. Immediately he realises that it is Prince Hal who has taken it. Hal is recalled to his bedside, and the king, who cannot control his grief, cries out:

> Thou hast stol'n that which after some few hours
> Were thine without offence, and at my death
> Thou hast seal'd up my expectation.
> Thy life did manifest thou lov'dst me not,
> And thou wilt have me die assur'd of it.
>
> IV. v. 101–05.

This passionate exclamation of reproach and self-pity represents what Bolingbroke, as a father, has been struggling and searching for in his private life.

Bolingbroke's complex feelings for his eldest son are revealed as early as *Richard II*. In the final act he refers to Hal's neglect and prodigality:

> Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?
> 'Tis full three months since I did see him last.
> If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.
>
> V. iii. 1–3.

But when he hears that Prince Hal will take part in a tournament at Oxford, the news that he will pluck a glove from a prostitute and wear it as a favour cannot prevent him from betraying his affection for his son.

> As dissolute as desperate! But yet
> Through both I see some sparks of better hope
> Which elder years may happily bring forth.
>
> V. iii. 20–22.

Fear of Hal's debauchery and hopes for his future are mingled with a strong affection in Bolingbroke's mind. As a king, he is profoundly consumed with the succession, and deeply dismayed by Hal's dissipation, which does not augur well for the future of his house and his country. Yet there is no doubt that the father needs and loves his son.

In *Henry IV: Part I*, act III, scene ii, we see Bolingbroke and Hal together for the first time. In this scene, in my opinion, the essential difference between the two is implied in their choice of words. When Prince Hal comes in, King Henry dismisses his attendant lords:

> Lords, give us leave; the Prince of Wales and I
> Must have some private conference.
>
> III. ii. 1–2.

This is an official speech both in phrasing and in tone; Hal is referred to as 'the Prince of Wales,' and their conversation as a 'private conference.' As soon as they are left alone, however, the king begins to speak as a father, using the intimate 'thou,' not the more formal 'you,' or royal 'we.'

> I know not whether God will have it so
> For some displeasing service I have done,
> That in his secret doom out of my blood
> He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;
> But thou dost in thy passages of life
> Make me believe that thou art only mark'd
> For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven,
> To punish my mistreadings.
>
> III. ii. 4–11.

His admonition itself is private in tone, concerning God's mysterious purposes, and his own personal pain. On the other hand, Hal replies consistently as a public figure, the Prince of Wales.

So please your Majesty, I would I could
Quit all offences with clear excuse
As well as I am doubtless I can purge
Myself of many I am charg'd withal.

III. ii. 18–21.

Using the word 'your Majesty,' Hal takes a certain distance from his father, although it was common in the Elizabethan age. Yet after upbraiding Hal by comparing his careless association with vulgar companions with Richard's indiscriminate friendship, Henry does not hesitate to recognise the blindness of his love for his son.

Not an eye
But is a-weary of thy common sight,
Save mine, which hath desir'd to see thee more,
Which now doth that I would not have it do,
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

III. ii. 87–91.

What Bolingbroke wants is not only Hal's reformation, but also his love for his father. But Hal does not understand his father's true feelings. His answer remains official.

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself.

III. ii. 92–3.

In this answer Hal's frustration that his father does not understand his true figure is revealed. Thus, we can see a gap between the father and the son. When, however, Bolingbroke hears of Hal's resolution to defeat Hotspur, his misgivings are easily removed and he invests the prince with full power of the royal army.

Although Hal, as the Prince of Wales, promises reformation, as a son, he continues to keep a distance from his father,

and Bolingbroke's paternal conflict with his son remains unresolved. The unreconcilable gulf between them is revealed on the battle field. When Bolingbroke is rescued from Douglas by Hal, the king says:

> Thou hast redeem'd thy lost opinion,
> And show'd thou mak'st some tender of my life,
> In their fair rescue thou hast brought to me.
> V. iv. 47–49.

Bolingbroke's speech implies two different misgivings he had about his son: his doubt about Hal's loyalty; and his suspicion about Hal's love of him. But, again, Hal disregards the second one.

> O God, they did me too much injury
> That ever said I hearken'd for your death.
> If it were so, I might have let alone
> The insulting hand of Douglas over you,
> Which would have been as speedy in your end
> As all the poisonous potions in the world,
> And sav'd the treacherous labour of your son.
> V. iv. 50–56.

Henry thanks Hal partly because he believes that Hal has showed his love by rescuing him, but Hal, consciously or unconsciously, refers only to the king's misgivings about his high treason.

As a usurper king, Bolingbroke is always in a state of helpless isolation. Because he is not the legitimate king, he can only maintain his power by fulfiling his duty as a king, or, in other words, by acting the role of the king. And because he has become king by committing a crime, he has lost spiritual tranquility. In his public isolation he cannot trust even the sworn friends like the Percys, and in his private loneliness he cannot relax, free from the consciousness of guilt, and longs for

'gentle sleep.' If there is one thing that can heal his solitude, it is Hal's love and understanding. And if there is one thing that can make Bolingbroke's 'troublesome' reign meaningful and justify it, it is Hal's legitimate succession to the crown and his good government. If Hal, as a son, loves and understands his father, Bolingbroke will restore the personal peace he craves, and his loneliness will be removed; and if Hal, as a royal successor, succeeds the crown legally, without owing it to anyone else except his father, Bolingbroke's sufferings will be recompensed; moreover, if Hal can restore and maintain order in England, and govern the state well, Bolingbroke's reign will be justified. Therefore, whether Bolingbroke's life becomes meaningless or meaningful depends wholly upon whether he can achieve a true reconciliation with Hal.

At the very end of his life, Bolingbroke's thirst for Hal's love and his yearning for the true reconciliation with his son are satisfied. In *Henry IV: Part II*, when King Henry reproaches Prince Hal for having taken the crown from his bedside while he was in coma, the prince makes a sincere apology:

> Coming to look on you, thinking you dead,
> And dead almost, my liege, to think you were,
> I spake unto this crown as having sense,
> And thus upbraided it: 'The care on thee depending
> Hath fed upon the body of my father;
> Therefore thou best of gold art worst of gold.
> Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,
> Preserving life in med'cine potable;
> But thou, most fine, most honour'd, most renown'd,
> Hast eat thy bearer up.' Thus, my most royal liege,
> Accusing it, I put it on my head
> To try with it, as with an enemy
> That had before my face murder'd my father,
> The quarrel of a true inheritor.

IV. v. 155–68.

For the first time in the play Bolingbroke hears Hal call him 'father'. In Hal's tearful face and disordered speech Bolingbroke feels the truth of his heart. And he also discovers Hal's sense of responsibility.

> O my son,
> God put it in thy mind to take it hence,
> That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,
> Pleading so wisely in excuse of it!
>
> IV. v. 177–80.

Thus, convinced both of Hal's personal affection and public responsibility, Bolingbroke pardons and blessed his son. As he faces death and looks back on his past, he finds the meaning of his life. If Henry Bolingbroke is a tragic figure, it is because he can find fulfilment of his role only in death. In his last speech, he recognises that he has been the protagonist of a tragic play. He begins with by looking back on his crime:

> God knows, my son,
> By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
> I met this crown, and I myself know well
> How troublesome it sat upon my head.
>
> IV. v. 183–86.

Bolingbroke fully assumes the moral responsibility for his deeds, and hopes that it will remain with him in death, leaving his son's heritage free of blame:

> To thee it shall descend with better quiet,
> Better opinion, better confirmation,
> For all the soil of the achievement goes
> With me into the earth.
>
> IV. v. 187–90.

He recognises that his role as king has not been free but determined by the political consequence of his usurpation.

> It seem'd in me
> But as an honour snatch'd with boist'rous hand,
> And I had many living to upbraid
> My gain of it by their assistances,
> Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed,
> Wounding supposed peace. All these bold fears
> Thou seest with peril I have answered;
> For all my reign hath been but as a scene
> Acting that argument.
>
> IV. v. 190–98.

It is not surprising that Bolingbroke should end his life in the knowledge that it hath been a play with a theme or 'argument' of a tragic nature which he has had to act out to the end. But he thinks of his play as a prelude to his son's play, which will change the mood from tragic to comic.

> And now my death
> Changes the mood, for what in me was purchas'd
> Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort;
> So thou the garland wear'st successively.
>
> IV. v. 198–201.

Thus, Henry Bolingbroke acts out his role.

As we have argued, Bolingbroke's conflicts—both moral and political—meet ambiguous solutions: politically he wins the civil war, but he has not finally pacified the country nor succeeded in establishing his social identity by his own hands; morally he dies in a room "Jerusalem", but he cannot realise his redemptive plan to enter Jerusalem itself. But there

are two things he has accomplished; the reconciliation with Prince Hal and the handing over of the crown to the legitimate successor. And this Hal fully acknowledges:

> My gracious liege,
> You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me;
> Then plain and right must my possession be,
> Which I with more than with a common pain
> 'Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain.
>
> IV. v. 220–24.

The crown, which has destroyed Richard II and tormented Henry IV, now descends to the new king.

NOTES

1) Ernest H. Kantrowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton U.P., 1957).
2) See "Richard II: The King By Birth", *Seijo Bungei*, vol. 116.
3) Quotations are from *The New Arden Shakespeare.*
4) M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty* (Arnold, 1961), p. 286. Also Derek Traversi, *Shakespeare from Richard II to Henry V* (Hollis & Carter, 1958), p. 50.
5) For example, M. M. Reese, p. 312.
6) Alvin Kernan, "The Henriad: Shakespeare's Major History Plays", *Yale Review*, 59 (1969), p. 17.
7) Traversi, p. 5.
8) Irving Ribner, "Bolingbroke, a true Machiavellian", *MLQ* 9 (1948), p. 183.
9) J. D. Wilson, *The First Part of the History of Henry IV* (The New Cambridge Shakespeare), p. 126.
10) James Winny, *The Player King: A Theme of Shakespeare's Histories* (Chatto & Windus, 1968), pp. 94–95.